

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 BANGKO 14197 01 OF 02 290919Z
ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AS-01 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 ACDA-07 /063 W
-----122629 290959Z /21

R 290803Z JUN 77
FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3709
INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA
AMCONSUL HONG KONG
AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
AMEMBASSY MANILA
USLO PEKING
AMEMBASSY RANGOON
AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE
AMEMBASSY TAIPEI
AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE
AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON
DIA WASHDC
CINCPAC
JUSMAG BANGKOK TH

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BANGKOK 14197

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS, ML, TH
SUBJ: THAILAND'S COMMUNIST INSURGENCY: DRY SEASON WRAP-UP

SUMMARY: THE 1976-77 DRY SEASON IN THAILAND (NOVEMBER TO MAY)
CAN BE CONSIDERED TO SOME EXTENT A BAROMETER OF THAILAND'S
COMMUNIST INSURGENCY AND THE GOVERNMENT'S ABILITY TO COPE WITH
IT. GENERALLY, IT WAS THE MOST ACTIVE DRY SEASON IN THE HISTORY
OF THE INSURGENCY WHICH IS GENERALLY CONSIDERED TO HAVE BEGUN IN
1965. ALTHOUGH THE LEVELS OF VIOLENCE WERE THE HIGHEST ON
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 BANGKO 14197 01 OF 02 290919Z

RECORD, THIS DOES NOT NECESSARILY BODE ILL FOR THE RTG. FOLLOWING
THE EVENTS OF OCTOBER 6, 1976, AN INTENSIFIED COMMUNIST OFFENSIVE
WAS ANTICIPATED TO BOOST CPT MORALE AND TO ENCOURAGE RECRUITMENT
OF STUDENTS AND OTHER LEFTISTS WHO WENT UNDERGROUND AND TO
DEMORALIZE THE RTG. IT WAS EXPECTED THAT THE COMMUNIST INSURGENTS
(CI) MIGHT ATTEMPT TO OCCUPY A REMOTE DISTRICT CAPITAL AS A SHOW
OF STRENGTH. THE RTG, HOWEVER, SHOWED A MUCH GREATER WILLINGNESS

TO MIX IT UP WITH THE CI THAN IN PREVIOUS YEARS, AND THE DRY SEASON WAS MARKED BY AN AGGRESSIVE RTG COUNTERINSURGENCY POSTURE DURING WHICH GOVERNMENT FORCES DISPLAYED ENCOURAGING STAYING POWER. FOR THIS RTG FORCES PAID THE PRICE OF A SIGNIFICANTLY HIGHER CASUALTY RATE THAN IN THE PAST, BUT THEY SEEM TO HAVE SUCCEEDED IN BLUNTING THE EXPECTED COMMUNIST OFFENSIVE. ALL CATEGORIES OF STATISTICS WERE UP MARKEDLY WITH THE EXCEPTION OF INCIDENTS (SIGHTINGS, PROPAGANDA, CI INITIATED HARRASSMENTS), WHICH INCREASED MODERATELY OVER THE 1975-76 DRY SEASON. THE NORTHEAST REMAINED THE CENTER OF INSURGENCY/COUNTERINSURGENCY ACTIVITY, CHALKING UP THE HIGHEST NUMBER OF CLASHES AND CASUALTIES. THE NORTH AND THE CENTRAL REGIONS SHOWED LITTLE INCREASE, BUT THE SOUTH SUB-SECTOR OF THE NORTHEAST AND THE SOUTH RECORDED THE GREATEST RELATIVE INCREASES IN ACTIVITY. IT APPEARS AT THIS JUNCTURE THAT A SORT OF STALEMATE HAS BEEN REACHED IN THE NORTH AND THAT THE RTG HAS ACHIEVED A MODICUM OF SUCCESS IN THE NORTHEAST. AT THE SAME TIME THE SOUTH SUBSECTOR OF THE NORTHEAST, PARTICULARLY THE LAHAN SAI AND TTA PHRAYA DISTRICTS OF BURIRAM AND PRACHIN BURI PROVINCES AND THE SOUTH HAVE DEVELOPED AS NEW CHALLENGES TO THE RTG. ADDITIONALLY, SOUTH THAILAND HAS REGAINED THE ATTENTION OF THE RTG AFTER SEVERAL YEARS OF NEGLECT. THE RTG CAN PROBABLY COPE WITH THE FORMER, BUT IT IS TOO EARLY TO MEASURE THE SUCCESS OF THE GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS AGAINST THE CI IN SOUTH THAILAND. IN SUM, THE PAST DRY SEASON SHOWED THE RTG ABLE TO HANDLE AN INCREASED LEVEL OF VIOLENCE. IN FACT, BECAUSE MUCH OF THE INCREASE IN ACTIVITY WAS DUE TO ITS OWN INITIATIVE, CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 BANGKO 14197 01 OF 02 290919Z

THE RTG PROBABLY HAD THE UPPER HAND. THEY STILL HAVE A LONG HARD ROAD AHEAD OF THEM. THE LARGE MILITARY OPERATIONS IN THE SOUTH MUST BE FOLLOWED BY SMALLER, SUSTAINED OPERATIONS. CORRUPTION AND LACK OF COOPERATION BETWEEN THE VARIOUS RTG AGENCIES REMAIN PROBLEMS, ESPECIALLY IN THE COMPLEX SOUTH. IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN IF THE PRACTICAL EFFECTS OF THAI/MALAYSIAN COOPERATION WILL EQUAL THE PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT IT SEEMS TO HAVE HAD. END SUMMARY.

1. AS A QUICK MEASURE OF THE PAST DRY SEASON, A STATISTICAL COMPARISON WITH PREVIOUS YEARS IS INSTRUCTIVE. (FOR EASE OF COMPARISON WE USE NOVEMBER THROUGH MAY, THE DRY SEASON FOR MOST OF THAILAND, ALTHOUGH THIS DOES NOT HOLD TRUE IN THE SOUTH).

DRY	FIRE-		CI	CI	CI
SEASON	FIGHTS		INCIDENTS	KILLED	CAPTURED DEFECTED
1974-5	181	345	64	4	170
1975-6	302	545	102	20	141
1976-7	502	578	139	24	167

DRY			
SEASON	RTG KILLED	RTG WOUNDED	CT CAMPS LOCATED
1974-5	137	365	22

1975-6	217	687	149
1976-7	326	958	200

BY DEFINITION, FIREFIGHTS ARE AN IMPORTANT INDICATOR OF RTG INITIATIVE, AND INCIDENTS ARE A PRIMARY INDICATOR OF CI ACTIVITY. IT SEEMS APPARENT FROM THE RESULTS OF THE 1976-7 DRY SEASON THAT THE RTG TOOK AN EARLY DECISION TO STEP UP THE OFFENSIVE OR CHANCE LOSING THE EDGE TO THE CI, WHO SEEMED DETERMINED TO MAKE A SHOW OF STRENGTH AFTER THE OCTOBER 6 COUP D'ETATA. THERE WAS AN INCREASE OF OVER 150 PERCENT IN THE NUMBER OF FIREFIGHTS, AN INCREASE OF ABOUT 35 PERCENT IN CI KILLED, AND 50 PERCENT INCREASE IN RTG KILLED AND NEARLY A 40 PERCENT INCREASE IN RTG WOUNDED. IN RECORDING A RECORD NUMBER OF FIREFIGHTS, THE RTG PAID A HIGH PRICE IN KILLED AND WOUNDED. THEY SEEM, HOWEVER, TO HAVE ACHIEVED CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 BANGKO 14197 01 OF 02 290919Z

A MODICUM OF SUCCESS. INTELLIGENCE REPORTS GAVE AMPLE EVIDENCE THAT RTG OPERATIONS CAUSED SERIOUS DISRUPTION TO CPT OPERATIONS, ESPECIALLY IN THE CRITICAL NORTHEAST. CADRE COMPLAINED OF FOOD SHORTAGES AND DIFFICULTY OF COMMUNICATING WITH THE MASSES. CLEARLY, THE WORD FILTERING THROUGH FROM THE INDOCHINESE REFUGEES HAD A SERIOUS, DAMPENING EFFECT ON CPT RECRUITMENT EFFORTS AMONG THE RURAL MASSES; HOWEVER, THE NUMBERS OF LEFTISTS AND STUDENTS WHO FLED TO THE JUNGLE PROBABLY EXCEEDED THE LOSSES SUFFERED BY THE CI IN KILLED, CAPTURED AND DEFECTED.

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 BANGKO 14197 02 OF 02 290934Z

ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AS-01 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 ACDA-07 /063 W

-----122788 290959Z /21

R 290803Z JUN 77

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3710

INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY MANILA

USLO PEKING
AMEMBASSY RANGOON
AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE
AMEMBASSY TAIPEI
AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE
AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON
DIA WASHDC
CINCPAC
JUSMAG BANGKOK TH

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 BANGKOK 14197

2. THE NORTH -- OUTSIDE OF A FEW SPECTACULAR INCIDENTS--ONE IN WHICH 22 RTG WERE KILLED AND ANOTHER IN WHICH 29 CIVILIANS WERE KILLED--THE NORTH WAS FAIRLY STAGMANT. THE RTG HAS CONTINUED TO APPLY A CONTAINMENT STRATEGY IN THE NORTH, AND, BY LARGE, IT SEEMS TO HAVE SUCCEEDED, ESPECIALLY IN THE CHIANG RAI AND NAN AREAS. THE TRI-PROVINCE AREA OF PHITSANULOK, PHETCHABUN AND LOEI REMAIN HIGHLY ACTIVE, BUT NO NOTICEABLE EXPANSION OF CI CONTROL TOOK PLACE DURING THIS DRY SEASON. THE CPT ORGANIZATION REMAINS STRONG IN THE TRI-PROVINCES, AND RTG ROAD-BUILDING PROJECTS ARE REGULARLY UNDER HARRASSMENT. AN RTG SETTLEMENT PROJECT HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED IN PHETCHABUN WITH A SURPRISINGLY LIGHT REACTION FROM THE CI. ALTHOUGH THE RTG HAS MINIMIZED COMBAT OPERATIONS
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 BANGKO 14197 02 OF 02 290934Z

IN THE NORTH TO KEEP THE CI AWAY FROM THE LOWLAND ETHNIC THAI, THE LEVEL OF RTG ACTIVITY HAS NOT RPT NOT DECREASED, BUT HAS CHANGED IN NATURE. PSYCHOLOGICAL OPERATIONS; CIVIC ACTION; POLITICAL EDUCATION AND INDOCTRINATION NOW CHARACTERIZE RTG ACTIVITY IN NORTHERN THAILAND.

3. THE NORTHEAST - THE PLACE WHERE THE INSURGENCY BEGAN REMAINS THE MOST CRITICAL TO THAILAND'S SECURITY. SHARING A LONG, POROUS BORDER WITH A NOW HOSTILE LAOS, THE RTG, UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF SECOND ARMY COMMANDER GENERAL PREM, HAS ADOPTED AN AGGRESSIVE COUNTER-INSURGENCY POSTURE AND, BY ANY ACCOUNTING, HAS TURNED IN A GOOD PERFORMANCE IN THE NORTHEAST. THE POPULACE OF THE NORTHEAST SEEMS TO BE ACUTELY AWARE OF THE INTERNAL SITUATION IN LAOS AND CAMBODIA WHICH GREATLY WEAKENS THE APPEAL OF THE CPT. ADDITIONALLY, THE RTG , BOTH IN THE NORTH AND THE NORTHEAST, HAS MADE GOOD USE OF REFUGEES AND DEFECTORS FOR PROPAGANDIZING.

4. THE SOUTH SUB-SECTOR OF THE NORTHEAST HAS PROVED TROUBLESOME TO THE RTG IN THE BURIRAM-KORAT-PRACHIN BURI AREAS, PARTICULARLY IN LAHAN SAI AND TA PHRAYA DISTRICTS. THE AREA IS SPARSELY POPULATED AND COMMUNICATIONS ARE POOR, PERMITTING THE CI TO CUT ROADS AND ATTACK GOVERNMENT OUTPOSTS. THE CI IN THIS AREA ALOS BENEFIT FROM PROXIMITY TO CAMBODIA REFUGE. STILL THE CI HAVE PAID A PRICE FOR INCREASED ACTIVITY IN THIS AREA. THEY LOST 23 KILLED THIS DRY

SEASON COMPARED TO THREE LAST YEAR. RTG LOSSES WERE 28 AND 24 FOR THE SAME PERIODS. THE INCREASE IN ACTIVITY IN THIS AREA IS PARTICULARLY STRIKING WHEN THE 1974-75 DRY SEASON STATISTICS ARE EXAMINED: NO CI KILLED, ONE RTG KILLED. ALTHOUGH CI ACTIVITY HAS INCREASED IN THE AREA, SOME OF THIS ACTIVITY CAN BE ATTRIBUTED TO KHMER INCURSIONS ALONG THE BORDER AREAS.

5. THE SOUTH -- LIKE THE SOUTH SUB-SECTOR OF THE NORTHEAST, THE STORY OF THE SOUTH CAN BE SEEN IN THE STATISTICS. FOR EXAMPLE, CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 BANGKO 14197 02 OF 02 290934Z

BETWEEN NOVEMBER, 1975, AND MAY, 1976, THERE WERE 11 FIREFIGHTS, 2 CI KILLED AND 36 RTG KILLED IN THE SOUTH. DURING THE SAME PERIOD ONE YEAR LATER THERE WERE 103 FIREFIGHTS, 28 CI KILLED AND 93 RTG KILLED. RTG INITIATIVE HAS BEEN LONG OVERDUE IN THE SOUTH. DURING THE PAST THREE TO FOUR YEARS THE CPT HAS BEEN ABLE TO ORGANIZE AND OPERATE ALMOST WITH IMPUNITY. THE GROUND FOR CPT EXPANSION WAS QUITE FERTILE BECAUSE OF LETHARGY AND WIDESPREAD CORRUPTION OF LOCAL OFFICIALS. THESE FACTORS COMBINED TO PRESENT THE RTG WITH A MUCH STRONGER AND EXPANDED CPT ORGANIZATION WHEN THE RTG FINALLY DETERMINED TO GET DOWN TO BUSINESS IN THE SOUTH. ALTHOUGH FAIRLY SIZEABLE MILITARY OPERATIONS PROBABLY WERE CALLED FOR, GIVEN THE DEGREE TO WHICH THE SITUATION HAD DETERIORATED IN THE SOUTH, THE APPARENT SUCCESS OF THESE OPERATIONS WILL BE EPHEMERAL IF THE RTG DOES NOT FOLLOW UP WITH SUSTAINED SECURITY FOR VILLAGES IN THE AREA AND A GREATER DISPLAY OF GOVERNMENTAL CONCERN FOR THE PROBLEMS OF THE SOUTH. TODAY, NOT TOO LONGER AFTER THE COMPLETION OF THE MILITARY OPERATIONS IN SURAT THANI AND NAKHON SI THAMMARAT, THE CI RETAIN THE CAPABILITY TO STRIKE GOVERNMENT OUTPOSTS.

6. THE SOUTHERN BORDER - WE HAVE REPORTED EXTENSIVELY ON THE JOINT THAI/MALAYSIAN BORDER OPERATIONS. THEY HAVE ACHIEVED LIMITED SUCCESS AND DISRUPTED CPM OPERATIONS, BUT THERE IS LITTLE DOUBT THAT THE MALAYSIAN COMMUNISTS WILL BE ABLE TO REGROUP, HAVING SUFFERED LITTLE MORE THAN TEMPORARY DISLOCATION. THE RENEWED AURA OF REGIONAL COOPERATION AGAINST THE COMMUNISTS IS WELCOME, BUT DISPOSAL OF THE CPM MUST REMAIN OF SECONDARY IMPORTANCE TO THE RTG, AND THE THAI WOULD BE UNWISE TO EXPEND TOO MANY RESOURCES ON THE BORDER WHEN IT HAS MORE PRESSING MATTERS TO ATTEND TO IN SURAT THANI AND NAKHON SI THAMMARAT, NOT TO MENTION OTHER PARTS OF THAILAND.

7. DESPITE OUR RATHER SKEPTICAL VIEW OF THE SUCCESSES CLAIMED IN THE SOUTHERN OPERATIONS, BOT IN THE MID-SOUTH AND ON THE BORDER, THE THAI SHOULD BE GIVEN CREDIT FOR FACING UP TO THE PROBLEMS WHICH HAVE DEVELOPED THERE AND TRYING TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT THEM. CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 BANGKO 14197 02 OF 02 290934Z

WHILE THEY MAY NOT HAVE ACHIEVED ANY LASTING RESULTS FROM THESE OPERATIONS AS YET, THE SITUATION IS CERTAINLY BETTER THAN IT WAS BEFORE THE RECENT DRY SEASON BEGAN.

8. EXTERNAL SUPPORT - THE CPT CONTINUES TO RECEIVE SUPPORT FROM LAOS, CAMBODIA, VIETNAM AND CHINA. THE CPT SEEMS TO BE ABLE TO EXPEND AMMUNITION WITH LESS CONCERN THAN PREVIOUSLY, AND THE READY REFUGE OF LAOS AND CAMBODIA CERTAINLY EASES THE OPERATIONS OF BORDER-BASED CI. TRAINING AND REST CAMPS IN LAOS AND CAMBODIA REPORTEDLY HAVE EXPANDED AND MOVED CLOSER TO THE BORDER.

9. CONCLUSION - DESPITE THE MOTIVATION PROVIDED BY THE EVENTS OF OCTOBER 6, 1976, FOR THE CPT TO ACHIEVE PROPAGANDA SUCCESSES AGAINST THE RTG, ANY EFFORT IN THAT DIRECTION SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN BLUNTED BY THE INITIATIVE DISPLAYED BY THE RTG FORCES THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY. ALL AGENCIES OF THE RTG HAVE SHOWN A MUCH HIGHER DEGREE OF CONCERN OVER THE INSURGENCY THAN HERETOFORE, AND RTG FORCES HAVE SHOWN THE WILLINGNESS TO SUSTAIN HIGH CASUALTIES OVER A RELATIVELY LONG PERIOD OF TIME, WHICH IS A DEPARTURE FROM EARLIER ATTITUDES. AT THE COST OF HIGH CASUALTIES, THE RTG HAS KEPT THE CPT FROM ACHIEVING NOTABLE SUCCESSES OR EXPANDING THEIR INFLUENCE INTO NEW AREAS. AS THE RAINS BEGIN, ACTIVITY ON BOTH SIDES CAN BE EXPECTED TO EASE, ALTHOUGH THE RTG IS PREPARING FOR A JOINT THAI/MALAYSIAN OFFENSIVE IN THE BETONG SALIENT OF YALA PROVINCE AND HAS STATED PUBLICLY THAT IT INTENDS TO MAINTAIN THE PRESSURE ON THE CI DURING THE RAINY SEASON.

WHITEHOUSE

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: GOVERNMENT OVERTHROW, COMMUNISTS, UNCONVENTIONAL WARFARE, INTELLIGENCE ASSESSMENTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 29-Jun-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977BANGKO14197
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770231-1175
Format: TEL
From: BANGKOK
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t1977069/aaaaahis.tel
Line Count: 308
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 519eb784-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 6
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 17-Nov-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2273608
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: THAILAND'S COMMUNIST INSURGENCY: DRY SEASON WRAP-UP SUMMARY: THE 1976-77 DRY SEASON IN THAILAND (NOVEMBER TO MAY) CAN BE CONSIDERED TO SOME EXTENT A BAROMETER OF TH
TAGS: PINS, TH, MY
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/519eb784-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009